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## ***FEATURE ARTICLES***

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### **The Office of Humanitarian Assistance and Demining: Supporting Humanitarian Needs Around the Globe**

**By**

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Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency**

I am delighted to introduce this section of the *DISAM Journal* relating to the responsibilities of Defense Security Cooperation Agency's (DSCA) Office of Humanitarian Assistance and Demining (HA/D) and how it fits within our mission of security cooperation. On March 13, 1998, personnel assigned to the Defense Department's humanitarian assistance and demining programs in the Pentagon were reassigned to DSCA from the office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) pursuant to a decision reflected in the Defense Reform Initiative (DRI). The goal of the DRI was to free policy staff to concentrate on corporate level policy, planning, and oversight – those missions were assigned to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. Program management and resources were consolidated under a single program manager to capitalize on the expertise of the DSCA security assistance staff.

Humanitarian activities conducted by the Department of Defense (DoD) are not new. For a number of years, specific congressional authorizations have mandated humanitarian activities by the Department aimed at alleviating human suffering and enabling struggling nations to develop democratic government and stable economies. In addition, the U.S. military has a long history of meeting human need while seeing to the defense of the nation – a tradition that reaches back to the leadership of General George Washington as he commanded the first American troops.

Today, in part through security cooperation programs, the DoD maintains unique operational, material, logistical, and organizational capabilities to provide humanitarian assistance worldwide. DoD's global reach, unrivaled infrastructure and highly trained and professional personnel allow the American military to respond rapidly and effectively to meet humanitarian assistance requirements in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests.

The Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) appropriation primarily funds DoD humanitarian assistance activities. The OHDACA programs support the U.S. military in meeting two requirements of the U.S. national security strategy and in turn, the DSCA mission. The first is to maintain a robust presence overseas aimed at shaping the international security environment in a manner that deters would-be aggressors, strengthens friends and allies, and promotes peace and stability in regions of tension. The second is for U.S. forces to respond effectively when called upon to assist the victims of storms, earthquakes and other natural or man-made disasters.

Functions accomplished by DSCA for the DoD humanitarian assistance (HA) program include management of the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid appropriation; oversight of the geographical commanders-in-chief's (CINC's) operational demining,

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humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) programs, and the DoD humanitarian assistance program (HAP).

The HAP is one important means by which the DoD furthers U.S. national security interests abroad. HAP provides excess, non-lethal property to authorized recipients, arranges for other HA projects, like refurbishing schools and medical facilities, funds the transportation of privately donated humanitarian assistance items, coordinates foreign disaster relief missions, and procures, manages, and arranges for delivery of humanitarian daily rations to those in need.

The humanitarian demining program assists countries that are experiencing the adverse affects of uncleared land mines. The program is directly managed by the geographical CINCs and contributes to unit and individual readiness by providing unique in-country training opportunities for our military forces that cannot be duplicated in the United States.

The humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) program permits U.S. military forces to carry out humanitarian assistance projects in conjunction with authorized military operational missions overseas. Typical projects include medical, dental, and veterinary care in rural areas, well drilling, and construction of basic sanitation facilities.

The Denton (space available) transportation program arranges 'no cost' transportation for donors or recipients for delivery of humanitarian goods to countries while the funded transportation program arranges DoD budgeted transportation for non-governmental organizations for delivery of humanitarian goods to countries in need.

The articles that follow describe humanitarian activities, not simply as a panoply of humane actions, but as security cooperation activities with a triple pay off:

- significant improvement in life sustainment to truly needy peoples
- accomplished by a military whose readiness, morale and training are improved by conducting real world missions
- which deter conflict and enhance U.S. presence abroad.

Over the decades – and particularly in the past years of turmoil following the end of the Cold War – the U.S. military has earned the pride of a nation as it has responded selflessly to humanitarian needs around the globe. One of our challenges in the coming years is to continue to define and support the humanitarian role as our forces remain ever prepared for their main task of seeing to the defense and security of our country.

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